

**Category: VOLUNTEERS**

**Winner: Saronikos Young Volunteers in Action**

These Greek volunteers are young, teenagers and they care. They want to see a better world. They feel that their world is not just their room, computer and friends but the planet. "Planet Earth." They are modern, lively and good students.

They started action 10 years ago and nothing stops them. They do things for their society – for themselves!!! Their time is limited because they have got school work during winter but nothing is impossible, they plan their time and they manage to do things efficiently and effectively. Yes, they care!!!

In general, they act on their own or they join forces with other groups:

- To clean the beaches, the sides of the roads or the local forest, to plant trees
- To help local bazaars of organizations, societies & schools
- To promote events or sale raffles for charities
- To organize activities & run the dog parade for Animal Day, to support stray animals
- To run the "Pet" photography contest every year
- To feed, walk or look after injured local strays
- To collect, wash, repair toys/clothes to give/donate to other children or institutions
- To record stories/novels for children or elderly who cannot read or see
- To help organize & run a carnival party for refugee children and local children to promote friendship and offer entertainment
- To help young or refugee children with homework & learn through games
- To organize athletic games with/for children living in institutions
- To support the church Soup kitchen or Caritas soup kitchen, collecting food items or serving /distributing the cooked meals
- To help in the summer with the fire watch duties
- To promote and maintain local traditions, food, spices
- To support the Olympic Games, Para Olympics and Special Olympics
- To organize or participate in concerts/events for charity purposes

The group started in 1990 under the guidance of Mrs. Anastasia Ioannidis (Educational Consultant) with the help of local educators, parents and retired citizens, they are all volunteers. Every year new volunteers join in and others leave. The group comes together in September and sets the goals of the year. They plan the events of the year and they decide what projects they will support and which organizations/ local societies they will work with. All their activities are supported by their parents, their schools, local societies and authorities.

**Category: CORPORATE ORGANISATIONS**

**Winner: Fundação INATEL**

Conversa Amiga in is Fundação INATEL's (Portugal) low cost payment telephonic line available every day from 3 pm until 10 pm, for all Portuguese population. The main goals of this line is to fight isolation and solitude and avoid social exclusion by receiving calls from anyone who wants to relieve some problem, some complicated situation from their life, or just to talk to someone.

The project and all the volunteers that are behind it, aim to give support and/or information to callers that need some specific help. Through the creation of an empathic relation, the line helps individuals not only to promote confidence, autonomy and the capacity to manage their own problems and conflicts, but also to re-establish the emotional balance. It is an anonymous and confidential line that defends the human rights and the human capacity to exceed the problematic situations and/or the loneliness through their own capacities and by using the right of speech.

Thinking about the team and their good practice behind the line, the formation actions pretend to be constant and variable, the reunions and the supervision of the calls received, consequently in response to the volunteers and the emotions felt by them. It is also our concern the participation in initiatives that may contribute to the well being of the line and the volunteers, also promoting the cooperation between organisations.



**Active Citizens of Europe Awards 2011**

**The Winners' Profiles**

***Greyfriars Tolbooth & Highland Kirk  
Edinburgh, Scotland***

***Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011***



**Supported by:**



**Category: NGOs**

**Winner: Scottish European Educational Trust**

The Scottish European Educational Trust (SEET) was established in 1993. It aims to promote and encourage education about Europe to students at schools, colleges and universities throughout Scotland. It works closely with the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, Learning Teaching Scotland, Europe Direct, the British Council and Scottish CILT.

Under the dedicated work of Barbara Macleod, SEET has established a great reputation across Scotland for innovative and informative projects engaging the students of Scotland in the wider European continent. SEET runs a primary school 'Euroquiz' that is contested by hundreds of primary schools across Scotland; a secondary school speaking competition that encourages knowledge of other nations, cultures and languages, and a range of careers events in Scottish universities to encourage living and studying across Europe. They do so on very small resources, with a dedicated volunteer group, and with a canny understanding of how to get the best out of Scottish young people of all ages and raise the horizons.

**Category: NGOs**

**Winner: Sue Ryder (for work in Scotland)**

Since 2006 Sue Ryder has been supporting the rehabilitation of currently serving offenders through offering volunteering placements in our charity shops and offices for placements. These prisoners are reaching the end of their custodial sentence and are released on Licence so that they can start the process of rehabilitation and resettlement. They are considered to be the lowest risk within the prison system and have worked hard to improve their life choices. All prisoners are fully risk assessed before being released on licence.

Volunteering with Sue Ryder gives them the opportunity to give something back to the community, while equipping them with skills that will increase their chance of finding paid employment on release. Ex-offenders cannot prove

themselves unless someone gives them a second chance. Preventing one person from re-offending can save the tax-payer £40,000 a year. Finding a job is the single most important factor in preventing re-offending, as it can cut it by half. Sue Ryder data show that 10% of its prison volunteers have moved on to paid work with Sue Ryder.

In a recent survey, prisoners said this about the programme:

- 94% of all our prison volunteers said they had been offered formal job specific training opportunities
- 97% of prisoners said the prison volunteer programme have helped them with teamwork
- 94% believed the prison volunteer programme gave them a sense of achievement
- 100% of respondents said they would recommend the prison volunteer programme to other prisoners

**Category: NGOs**

**Winner: Serve the City**

Many people want to get involved in the community and help in some way, but it is hard to know where to start. This is where Serve the City has made such an impact.

Serve the City organises events where volunteers can show kindness in practical ways to people in need, on the principle that many people doing small things together can make a big difference.

Serve the City began in Brussels in 2005, and now, six years later, is active or starting in 70 cities around the world. The reason for this phenomenal success is their flexible approach to encouraging civic engagement through volunteering: volunteers sign up to serve in projects that fit their interests and abilities; volunteers can participate as individuals or as a group, on a one-time basis or as a regular commitment. Serve the City also makes it easy for expatriates and other non-native residents to get involved in the life of their city.

Serve the City partners with homeless shelters, refugee centres, orphanages, and other local associations, and its projects are often simple: sports, music, arts and crafts, language courses, and games with children, serving food

and cutting hair. They connect people who want to 'give something back' to the city they are in with a meaningful opportunity to do so.

*"Refugees, the homeless, orphans, victims of human trafficking, the disabled, the poor. We know them by their needs. What if we knew them by name?"*

Carlton Deal, Director/Founder of Serve the City

**Category: VOLUNTEERS**

**Winner: Redhall Walled Garden Trainees**

Redhall is a SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) mental health service/training facility operating in a Georgian walled garden. Redhall's 50 volunteers/trainees are people recovering from mental health problems and suffer from low confidence, anxiety and stress-related illnesses. It is important to the people who come to Redhall Walled Garden to receive support and training for themselves that they also want to give something back to the community and they work between 3 to 5 days a week.

Despite their difficulties they have produced an award-winning garden which is open to the public and attracts over 3,000 visitors a year. This is a huge challenge for people who may have seldom ventured from their own home before coming to Redhall.

The garden receives visits from many community groups, as well as from the general public, and the trainees always do the hosting and site tours.

Redhall also hosts weekend open days staffed by trainees which attract hundreds of people. This again is quite a challenge for Redhall's people and it is their huge sense of wanting to contribute that helps them to overcome their fears in order to attend and help out.

Redhall Trainees - Volunteers - should be commended for having the courage to overcome their own issues to make Redhall a safe and welcoming place for other people and to help to tackle the stigma of mental illness by their openness, generosity and hospitality.